

2011 Annual Narrative

Staffing

Permanent Staff:

Patty Nagel, Supervisory Outdoor Recreation Planner

Michelle Jackowski, Office Assistant

Larry Balsamo, Maintenance Worker (promoted / transferred to Iroquois NWR, Sept 24).

Norma Kline, Wildlife Biologist, was away from work for the entire year for health reasons (workers compensation case). Norma was terminated for non-disciplinary reasons (inability to work due to illness) (Dec. 17).

Temp employees:

Megan Zurasky, Office Clerk (vacations and summer)

Kody Goodge, Maint Helper (worked part time during fall semester to cover refuge in absence of a permanent Maint. Worker, and full time during vacations and summer) Steve Sliwinski, Bio. Tech (June – Aug)

Harry Zurasky, YCC Leader

Nathan Albert, YCC Leader

Darren Stover, Maintenance Helper/Facility Management Trainee in Student Career

Experience Program, graduated in December and converted to permanent employee at Long Island NWR Complex (March)

New volunteers:

Linda Anderson, Visitor Services (January 18)

Samantha Long, Visitor Services, maintenance, biology (January 27)

Breanna Anderson, Maplewood Senior Project (Summer Fest activity)

Lisa Lewis, Maplewood Senior Project (Summer Fest activity)

Austin Sosnowski, Maplewood Senior Project (Summer Fest activity)

Grant Cox, French Creek Christian School (Summer Fest activity)

Kelsey Carpenter, French Creek Christian School (Summer Fest activity)

RV Camper Volunteers: Tom & Sally Hall assisted with preparing for the Refuge's Summer Fest (May, June)

YCC: Megan Butler, Michael Weisman (resigned early), Cheyanne Crum, Simone Sarsfield, Chelsea Kightlinger, Carissa Knightlinger, Brandon Owens, Alex Hicks, Jesse Hunter, Kyle Ertman (returned as YCC Youth Leader),

Biological Program

The Preliminary Project Proposal submitted in June of 2010 to the Service Director was approved to begin detailed planning. "In the detailed planning for easement or fee acquisition, we expect you to demonstrate spatially-explicit biological planning and conservation design to achieve measurable biological outcomes" (April 26)

Contracted with Smerkar Services to spray Aqua Neat and Induce on garlic mustard and bird's foot trefoil on selected sites on Johnstown Road, North Allen Road, Lake Creek Road, McFadden Road, Fowler Road, Richie-Boland Road.(June) Also, they sprayed Garlon 3A and a surfactant on bird's foot trefoil on refuge service roads – Cooper's Marsh Road, Pool B Service Road, Pool C/D Service Road, Pool N Service Road, Maintenance Shop Service Road, Lone Maple Service Road, Pool 9 Road, Pool 7 Service Road, Meyer's Pond Road. (September)

Continued contract with Western Pennsylvania Conservancy regarding a protocol to evaluate wetland systems for possible restoration by removing water control structures and other blockages.

Multi-flora rose and autumn olive plants that on several refuge fields (see 2010 Annual Narrative) were treated in 2010 were resprayed by the contractor. (August)

Youth Conservation Corps enrollees cut multi-flora rose from fields along Teepleville Flats Road, on the Seneca Division (approximately 50 acres). (June-Aug)

Phragmites, Purple loosestrife pulled around Pool 4, D, and N (cursory surveys, no mapping done).

Soil samples were taken from some farm fields and old fields to determine if there was a nutrient difference in soils that are not regenerating as quickly as other fields. Some fields are completely covered with golden rod. The results indicate that those fields all have far less calcium than other fields.

The former picnic area (off of Oil Creek Rd, north of Deer Run Overlook) was restored. Concrete pads from picnic pavilions were removed and trees planted.

Vernal Pool Study – contracted with Mark Lethaby to complete through a study funded by USGS.

Woodcock Surveys – completed by volunteers and office staff (Tom & Sally Hall, Ron & Char Oswald, Jay Wentz, Rich Eakin, Bill Trout & Ron Leberman, Patty Nagel & Bertie Tullis, Michelle Jackowski)

Black Duck Banding – PA Game Commission (Jan)

Bald Eagle Surveys completed by volunteer Tony Piccorelli (Jan – June).

Blue bird monitoring completed by volunteer Gary Sliter.

Cooperative Farming

No changes to the program this year: 3 farmers (Reese, Furry, Parker), 286 acres

CCP

New Regional Planner assigned– LiaMcLaughlin (September)

Refuge Planning Update sent to all on CCP mailing list. (September)

Core Team meeting (October 26)

Met with contractors (Dr. **Mickey E. Heitmeyer, Greenbrier Wetland Services** Rt. 2, Box 2735. Advance, MO 63730, 573-625-1141, mheimeyer@greenbrierwetland.com) to begin a hydrogeomorphic study of refuge. (August) Throughout the winter, collected many documents from the refuge files to assist the subcontractor, Cary Aloia (cary_aloia@msn.com, 719-850-2562, 3393 East County Road, 9S, Monte Vista, CO 81144) in developing their report.

Interpretation & Education

Installed 2 new interpretive panels in the Tsuga Trail kiosk: Forest Diversity and Birds of the Forest. (November) [Two additional panels: Bird Conservation Regions and Migration were fabricated and will be installed in the future.]

Developed new Refuge merit badge interpretive activity – “Refuge-caching”. Families or individuals can complete 10 of the activities in the Program Booklet by using a GSI unit to find answers around the refuge. Participants earn a certificate, an embroidered patch, and their picture on the refuge “Wall of Fame” (Sept).

YCC crew installed eight (purchased as standard trail signs from Wilderness Graphics) interpretive signs on Tsuga Trail on wildlife signs, biodiversity, sounds of nature, layers of the forest, dead/nursery trees, animal tracks, decomposers, and habitat.

Summer Fest. First event without all of Guys Mills community (formerly the Guys Mills Heritage Fest). Theme – Stewardship. Five local High School seniors did their senior projects with us – representing historical conservation figures – Breanna Anderson (Rachel Carson); Austin Susnowski (Gaylord Nelson); Grant Cox (Teddy Roosevelt); Kelsey Carpenter (Mardy Murie); Lisa Lewis (Lady Bird Johnson). Activities included planting native plants, taking home a native flower, making a wind chime from recycled items, coloring a quilt square (quilt now hanging in the refuge headquarters lobby), playing senses bingo, matching refuges with wildlife, examining bugs with magnifying glasses, and watching a watershed demonstration. The Friends of ENWR sponsored a silent auction and a “Trash to Treasure” Contest (16 entries). 266 visitors. (June 25)

YCC crew enlarged the native plant garden on the south side of the refuge headquarters. Plant identification labels were added to the garden.

Wildlife Observation & Photography

Photo contest (see note under Friends of ENWR).

Hunting & Fishing & Trapping

No changes were made to the Hunting, Fishing, or Trapping Programs from the previous year.

17 individuals submitted bids for the 16 trapping areas on the refuge. The established bidding process was followed and resulted in one bidder not being awarded a unit, and one unit not being selected. The bidder was offered the chance to trap Area E, but he declined. Bidders present during the public bidding were offered the opportunity to trap Area E, Tom Terrill agreed to do so. All 16 units were then awarded for a total of \$1236.45. Trapping results for the season: 18 mink, 107 raccoon, 118 beaver (18 from Area B), 163 muskrat (36 from Area N), 2 red fox, 12 opossum, and 1 skunk. Area M was not trapped by the awarded trapper.

Outreach/Publications

Initiated Facebook Page (March)

Participated in the Pymatuning Waterfowl Festival in Linesville, PA. Display about Jr. Duck Stamp program, sold Duck Stamps. (Sept 17-18)

Crawford County Fair – Aug 20-27. Created a “bird blind”. Visitors looked through “binoculars” at a mural with birds. They guessed the total number of birds and entered the prize drawing.

INSIDERie – issued quarterly

March – management tools featured

June – Partners in Wildlife Program featured

September – Vision Conference, Madison, WI, featured

December – Strategic Habitat Conservation & Landscape Conservation Coops. featured

Refuge Bird List was updated by volunteers Rich Eakin and RonLeberman. Brochure reprinted (July).

Hunt brochures updated with current dates and reprinted.

During NWR, a ham radio operator broadcast from the refuge to tell other operators driving near the area about NWRs.

Property/Purchases

Angle Frame trailer (6' x 16') sand blasted and painted, rewired, new brakes

Transferred our 2005 Ford F550 dump truck (I-480405) to Ohio River NWR in exchange for their larger International dump truck (October)

Transferred 2010 Chevrolet HHR passenger vehicle(I-482888) to Iroquois NWR (November)

Sold Savin9925DP copier, pallet of nails, Delta table top saw, 1988 John Deere 310C Loader/backhoe, and a Thiokol Tracked ATV Imp Snow Cat on GSA excess property auction. (October)

Destroyed and recycled – John Deere 500 snow mobile, Simplicity lawn mower, John Deere lawn mower, John Deere LX188 lawn mower, John Deere 185 lawn mower, HP Laserjet 4050, radio base station U2Lo69, Ricarvacumn, Trail Boss 250 ATV, 2 Murray push mowers, John Deere push mower, framing nails, truck cap, John Deere High Lift with bucket 2 hard computer towers without hard drives, computer monitors, misc computer parts and radios..

Purchased Husqvarna Snow blower for Headquarters, Quality Trailer 6x12, Kubota ZD 323, Zero Turn Lawn Mower (Feb.), HP 5800 Printer for Maintenance Shop Office, HP Laserjet P4014dn Printer for headquarters, Lexmark XS652de Copier for headquarters, Woods Brush Hog BB48, 5 more lightweight folding tables, bookcase for visitor center, new office chairs, safety and educational films for YCC, staff, and the public

Facilities

Contracted with Wilkinson Excavating to remove concrete pads near old picnic site (west side of Pool 9, off of Beuchat Road. Planted trees in that area to restore it. (August)

New well for Q9 completed. (May)

YCC crew placed weed retardant paper and clean rock around refuge entrance signs to reduce the amount of maintenance and mowing to be done around each sign.

Replaced both toilets in women's restroom at headquarters. (July)

Replaced outdated volunteer plaques in headquarters with general appreciation sign about volunteers and partners, and a quote about the refuge system (headquarters lobby).

Installed concentrated cleaning solution system from State Industrial via GSA in headquarters. Saves money, and the environment.

Pool 9 crane painted. New Pool 9 water gauge placed on west side of the emergency spillway (to provide better/safer readability during storm events) (August).

Concrete pads from former picnic pavilions were removed.

Friends of Erie NWR

Refuge Spring Cleanup (April)

Sponsor of Refuge Summer Fest, a Trash to Treasure contest, and a silent auction. (June 25)

Friends of Erie NWR participated in the French Creek Clean-up. (Sept 10)

Sponsored 13th Biennial Refuge Photo Contest in conjunction with Presque Isle Audubon Society. (Awards Reception – Oct 16)

“Crawford County Outdoors” (through Armstrong Cable) worked with Friends of Erie NWR to produce an orientation film about the refuge. Show host - Duanne Koller. Refuge Manger Tom Roster, President of Friends Bill Trout, past-President and expert birder Rich Eakin. (Oct 19). The program aired on November 19th.

Annual Membership Meeting of the Friends of Erie NWR. (Nov 14)

Special Visits

Kurt Anderson, Ducks Unlimited. Tour of refuge. (Feb. 15)

Marvin Moriaarty, FWS Regional Director. Visit with staff and tour of refuge (June)

Rich Yee (Regional Safety Office). (August) Environmental audit.

Curtis Schreffler, Jim Campbell from USGS Pennsylvania Field Office (215 Limekiln Road, New Cumberland, PA 17070, 717-730-6913). Meet & greet, tour of refuge. (August 24)

French Creek Collaborative met at refuge headquarters. Bud Cook and Liz from The Nature Conservancy presented their effort to conserve Cherry Valley NWR. (Aug 30-31)

Ken Brownell (Regional Dam Safety Engineer). Inspected dams/Pools 4 and 9, and Peterson's Pond. (Oct 5)

Lia McLaughlin – facilitated CCP Core Team Meeting (with Tom Roster, Patty Nagel, Shayne Hoachlander (PA Game Commission), Nevin While (PA Fish & Boat Commission) (October 26)

Scott Kahan – newly appointed Regional Chief of Refuges visited. Participated in meeting with partners in French Creek Consortium. (October 25)

Rick Vollick inspected the weather station

Student Conservation Association employees/volunteers here working on a nation-wide update of refuge trail information. (June 23-24)

Training & Travel

Tom Roster attended a French Creek partnership meeting at Carnegie Mellon Foundation with Pat Noonan and FWS Reg. Director Marvin Moriarty (Feb 23).

Patty Nagel to Patuxent Research Refuge for Crucial Conversations Training (July 19-21)

Misc.

Kelly Run project completed, in conjunction with PA Ecological Services Field Office. Stream restored to original stream bank. ENWR Maintenance Worker, Larry Balsamo assisted. (June – Aug)

Tamarack First Responders Course held in Refuge Headquarters (October)

All bird bands were all inventoried and returned to the Bird Banding Lab at Patuxent, Laurel, MD.

Pennsylvanian Game Commission Deputy Meeting was held in Refuge Headquarter on November 26th.

A Special Use Permits was issued to Scott Wissinger (Allegheny College) and his student Christine Smith to catalog the distribution and abundance, and the seasonal timing of the life cycle of caddisflies and dragonflies in shallow ponds and wetlands.